

Connecting Communities:

Better Money Habits Case Study



The Planning Office for Urban Affairs (“POUA”) is a non-profit housing developer and social justice ministry associated with the Archdiocese of Boston. POUA strives to create vibrant communities by developing housing where people of modest means can live with dignity and respect in homes they can afford.

For POUA, 2020 marked a half-century of serving the varied communities throughout the Boston area. During that time, POUA has created 3,000+ units of affordable and mixed-income housing that provide homes for more than 11,000 people.

This work has resulted in the production of high-quality residential developments forming strong communities characterized by economic, racial and ethnic diversity for people of all ages and abilities; providing both affordable rental and homeownership opportunities; and undertaking development efforts that address the needs of a wide-ranging population including the most vulnerable among us, as well as those of moderate means.

Connecting Communities Effecting Change

Across its housing portfolio, POUA is implementing a variety of programs that meet the needs of residents in addition to providing them with homes. These programs include the *Health and Housing Initiative*, a partnership with the University of Massachusetts’ Gerontology Program to assess and track the health needs of residents and develop interventions and programs to respond to and address those needs, and the *Asset and Wealth Building Initiative*, which is a partnership with different financial institutions to work with residents to provide financial literacy and educational services, as well as to develop savings programs.

Better Money Habits Initiative at Uphams Crossing

In May 2021, Bank of America hosted two Better Money Habits virtual sessions with residents from POUA’s Uphams Crossing development in Dorchester, MA. This program is one of POUA’s initial steps toward providing residents with services beyond housing.

During the sessions, residents were guided by employee volunteers known as Better Money Habits Champions who shared easy-to-understand information and tips on budgeting, spending and saving, building and managing credit, and financial safety and security. The practical tips offered on budgeting and credit were especially well received by the attendees during the intimate and interactive session. The sessions are an example of how the Bank brings together tailored resources to help make financial lives better.

“The program was very informative as it offered much insight to empowering my family and me to better understand our financial responsibilities and how we can improve.”

Natalie Sequea
Uphams Crossing resident

Continuous Impact

The Bank has been working with POUA since 1998 providing tax credit equity and debt financing for affordable housing developments in Boston and surrounding communities.

The training sessions for residents at Uphams Crossing were the inaugural BMH sessions. The Bank will partner with POUA to expand Better Money Habits training for the 11,000 people that live in their 3,000+ units of affordable housing.